

What is Offer versus Serve?

Offer versus Serve or OVS is a concept that applies to menu planning and to the determination of reimbursable school meals. OVS allows students to decline some of the food offered in a school lunch or school breakfast and is applicable to all menu planning approaches.

Benefits of OVS: Less food waste, cost savings when preparing less food, increased customer satisfaction, and students eat better when they are allowed choices.

OVS: Who, When and Where?

OVS is:

- Required for lunch at senior high schools
- Optional at lunch in lower grade levels
- Optional at breakfast in all grades

Who decides?

- School food authority decides whether to implement OVS when optional and in what grades
- Students decide what foods to decline (except the entrée at lunch), if any

Reimbursable Breakfasts (Nutrient Standard Menu Planning)

General requirements for OVS at breakfast:

- Students must be offered fluid milk and at least 2 additional menu items in the planned serving sizes.
- Students may decline no more than 1 of the 3 or more menu items offered.
- Students may decline any menu item, including the milk.
- Each breakfast must be priced as a unit. That is, a student pays the same price whether he/she takes 2 or more menu items.



Reimbursable Lunches (Nutrient Standard Menu Planning)

General requirements for OVS at lunch:

- Students must be offered the full planned menu in planned serving sizes.
- The student must always take an entrée.
- If the planned menu contains 3 menu items, the student may decline only 1 menu item. If the planned menu contains more than 3 menu items, the student may decline only 2 items.
- To count toward OVS, the student must take the full planned serving of a menu item.
- Students may take smaller portions of the declined menu items.
- The meal must be priced as a unit. That is, the student who takes 2 menu items (from 3 or 4 offered menu items) pays the same price as a student who takes all menu items offered.

For more information on OVS please see the USDA's guidance at http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/offer_v_serve.html

NUTRIENT STANDARD MEAL PATTERN REQUIREMENTS

For the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

Lunch

- _____ Appropriate age/grade groups are selected
- _____ Meals meet nutrient standards when averaged over the school week
- _____ At least 3 menu items (entrée, side dish, and milk) are offered daily
- _____ Fluid milk as a beverage is offered daily

Breakfast

- _____ Appropriate age/grade groups are selected
- _____ Meals meet nutrient standards when averaged over the school week
- _____ At least 3 menu items (entrée, side dish and milk) are offered daily
- _____ Fluid milk as a beverage is offered daily

Note: The district must use USDA-approved menu planning software to analyze menus for compliance with nutrient standards. The analysis of key nutrients in all food items offered during a week must be completed prior to the meal service, and an average for each week must be printed and kept on file. If menu changes occur more than three weeks before the meal service, a new analysis must be completed.

Recommendations

- Choose low-saturated/trans fat choices whenever possible
- 2 fat contents of fluid milk are required: use low-fat choices (1%, skim)
- Choose whole grains whenever possible

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